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RR RUEH DU RUEHJO
DE RUEHSA #0561 0831622
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 241622Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7802
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1285
RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 6670
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 0792
RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 9013
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1286
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0593

UNCLAS PRETORIA 000561

SIPDIS

DRL/MLGA FOR MELIKE YETKEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA TO VOTE YES ON 'DEFAMATION OF
RELIGION' RESOLUTION

REF: SECSTATE 27376

¶1. South Africa will vote in favor of the "Combating defamation of religions" resolution, if the latter is put to vote in the U.N. Human Rights Council. The DFA's Pitso Montwedi, Chief Director for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, said that South Africa has supported the resolution in the past and would do so again. South Africa was sympathetic, he said, to the concern of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) over generalizations and stereotypes in which the Muslim faith was equated with terrorism. Montwedi indicated there was not scope for influence or persuasion for a change in the vote or for abstention.

¶2. Montwedi remarked that his own sources suggested the measure might not be put to a vote at all, citing a prior agreement between the OIC and EU states that the latter would not run any resolutions related to religious belief, specifically including this one. Montwedi said the OIC is left "wondering what to do," and may choose not to put the resolution to a vote.

¶3. Poloffs continue to meet with Montwedi biweekly, working to harmonize USG and SAG understanding of each others' perspectives on such themes.

LA LIME